

## Telemedicine Health Care Services Arrive at ADPH: Medical Care Provided in a Confidential, Culturally Sensitive Manner

Telemedicine is defined as the use of communications technology to exchange health information electronically and provide medical services to patients from a distance. It includes real time videoconferencing between patients and health care providers, transmission of images and remote monitoring of vital signs.

In 2012, the Division of HIV Prevention and Care began funding telemedicine as an innovative biomedical intervention in delivering care to patients diagnosed with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

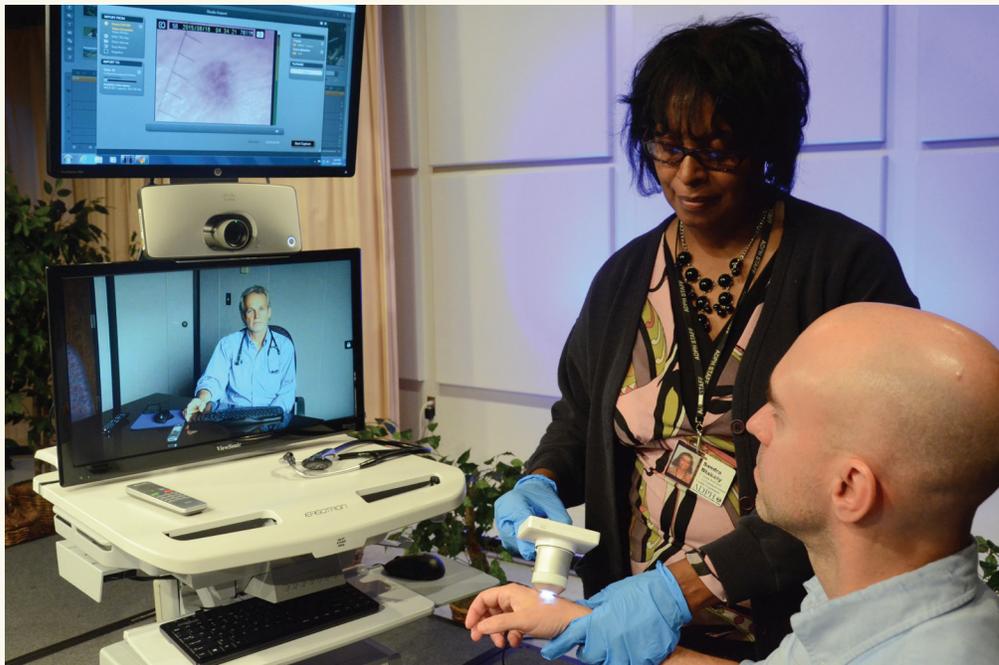
The telemedicine service was established to address the lack of HIV care in rural areas of the state. Telemedicine allows health care providers to reach underserved populations of HIV-positive individuals and increase access to care in rural areas without the need for extended travel. In 2012 the Division of HIV Prevention and Care partnered with Medical AIDS Outreach of Alabama to expand telemedicine services to rural counties. Medical AIDS Outreach first initiated telemedicine services to HIV-positive patients in 2011 through collaboration with Thrive

Alabama (Huntsville) and Whatley Health Care (Tuscaloosa).

The division in partnership with Video Communications is further expanding its reach of telemedicine in rural Alabama by funding start-up costs for the necessary equipment in select county health departments. The Video Communications and Distance Learning Division, working with the Bureau of Information Technology, evaluated equipment to identify the most appropriate components in order to build/integrate the telemedicine carts rather than purchase from a vendor. This resulted in a telemedicine cart available to county health departments for under \$12,000 rather than purchasing from a vendor for more than \$25,000. ADPH has always worked to provide health care services utilizing innovative and cost-efficient procedures.

Now the department is actively engaging medical partners who want to offer health care services utilizing telemedicine technology and health care providers, transmission of images and remote monitoring of vital signs. Telemedicine services are available in Covington, Conecuh, Marengo, and Perry county health departments. Services are offered in a confidential and culturally sensitive manner. In October, Henry County Health Department will join these other four sites in providing telemedicine services.

Increasing use of telemedicine is a key goal in Alabama's Community



**The dermatology lens for the handheld exam camera is able to provide magnification to allow the physician at the remote location to examine moles, lesions and other growths. This image is transmitted as seen on the top screen.**

# Attendees Take 'Kaizen' Approach to Quality Improvement

Along with attendees from Mississippi and Rhode Island, two representatives from the department participated in a Kaizen event in Washington, D.C., during the week of June 14-19. Attending from Alabama were Melanie Rightmyer, D.N.P., R.N., Million Hearts® Health Systems Program Manager with the Chronic Disease Programs Branch, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, and Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist Krishona Lee, M.P.H., Bureau of Family Health Services. Also participating were representatives from the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD).

Kaizen is an efficient way to approach quality improvement. Kaizen is a Japanese word meaning small changes for the better. In an intensive training, participants were charged with improving the grant reporting process for two federal grants: Title V and 1305.

Project goals are as follows:

- Free staff labor hours to focus on value-added program activities.
- Ensure that the grant requirements, including reporting, better meet the funding agencies' needs.
- Ensure all collected data can be used to support quality outcomes. The most valuable information required is known, requested, and used by the funding agency.
- Grant requirements are aligned with awards.

"The training was valuable because the skills learned can be applied to any project situation," Dr. Rightmyer said. "We need to go into grants with defined and understood roles and use our partners' resources and skills to the fullest."

Ms. Lee agreed and said, "The actual work of the Title V MCH Service and the 1305 Chronic Consolidated Block Grants is critical to preventing disease and health care costs. In early April, at a two-day training in D.C., we started the Kaizen by fostering collaboration between the two programs and realizing

some synergy in the actual reporting of similar programmatic work and performance objectives. We hope the Kaizen learning experience will foster strong relationships and free up staff time for partnership on the actual work of these programs."

The learning didn't end in Washington, D.C.; tools and skills brought back to each state have already proven beneficial, Dr. Rightmyer added. During monthly conference calls, participants will continue the quality improvement process. Brainstorming and learning from each state's progress including highlighting implementation of technologies such as Microsoft SharePoint will be shared. This work was part of a larger project, the Quality Improvement Forum, which is led by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), and is designed to work on quality improvement opportunities that impact many different agencies in the public health system, including federal, state, and local agencies. Continual Impact, LLC provided QI training and support. The QI Forum is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



**Participants in Kaizen shown, front, from left: Jordan Kennedy (Rhode Island), Krishona Lee (Alabama), Zarina Fershteyn (National Association of Chronic Disease Directors), Melanie Rightmyer (Alabama), Lacy Fehrenbach (AMCHP), and Lia Katz (ASTHO). Back: Marilyn Johnson (Mississippi), Jennifer Olsen (Rhode Island), and Meagan Robinson (Mississippi).**

## Alabama Department of Public Health

### Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

### Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public's health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public's health and to provide caring quality services.

## Alabama's Health

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# Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) Survey Conducted

Representatives from the Alabama Department of Public Health conducted household disaster preparedness surveys of residents in Baldwin County June 10-12.

The survey is a collaborative effort of the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Baldwin County Health Department and the Baldwin County Emergency Management Agency. Teams of two people conducted the surveys which consist of door-to-door interviews. Households were selected randomly to participate in the 10-15 minute survey that will help officials prioritize their response and distribution of resources in the future.

Ricky Elliott, Area Administrator for Public Health Areas 7 and 9, stated, "Following any type of disaster, public health and emergency management professionals must be prepared to respond to and meet the needs of the people. The information from this survey will greatly aid in planning for the county. We greatly appreciate and value the cooperation and participation of the public. I would like to express my appreciation to all ADPH staff and others who contributed to make this CASPER a success."

The following individuals were thanked for their participation:

Daphne Baum – Baldwin County Health Department  
Cassie Brailer – Epidemiology  
Tammy Brown – Baldwin County Health Department  
Haskey Bryant – Public Health Area 3  
Regina Burton – Baldwin County Health Department

Erin Coker – Mobile County Health Department  
Randall Cole – Public Health Area 3  
Bradley Cooper - Public Health Area 7  
Miranda Daniels – Epidemiology  
John Davis – Public Health Area 9  
Maleni Dominguez - Baldwin County Health Department  
Camilla English – Baldwin County Health Department  
Barbara Etheridge – Public Health Area 7  
Elizabeth Foster – Public Health Area 1  
Jillian Gibbs – Public Health Area 3  
Kimberly Heath – Public Health Areas 5/6  
Mike Hudgens – Immunization  
Angie Keener – Public Health Areas 5/6  
Thuy Kim – Epidemiology  
Teddy King – Baldwin County Health Department  
Cathy LaSource – Baldwin County Health Department

Peggy Lassiter – Baldwin County Health Department  
Mary McIntyre, M.D., M.P.H. – Disease Control and Prevention  
Melissa Morrison – CEFO/CDC Assignee  
Stephen Murray – Mobile County Health Department  
Tina Norwood – Public Health Area 7  
Troy Perry – Public Health Area 3  
Teresa Porter – Public Health Area 9  
Chris Sellers – CHIP  
Kelly Singleton – Public Health Area 9  
Denise Strickland – Immunization  
Cyndi Tereszkievicz – Public Health Area 10  
Mike Tyler – Public Health Area 2  
Jessica Wade – Public Health Area 9  
DeeAnn White – CHIP  
MisChele White – EMS  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Staff**  
Tasha Stehling Ariza  
Mary Dott  
Sara Vagi



**Some of the team members who participated in the CASPER based in Gulf Shores in June gathered for this group photograph.**

## Smokefree Victory Won in Small Town Alabama Café

It all began when an irate man complained to a Central Office employee that the owners of a café were allowing people to smoke while going through a buffet-style serving line. The café is located in a town with a population of less than 1,000 on a remote highway in northeast Alabama.

After being transferred the call and speaking with the fuming café customer, Bob Hinds, Alabama Behavioral Health Division director, e-mailed Public Health Area 5 Tobacco Coordinator Janet Hill who embarked on a fact-finding trip. Bearing educational materials and a copy of the Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA), she went to speak with the owner. The small establishment's owner was not at all familiar with the act and she took time to speak with him about the hazards of secondhand smoke.

The owner explained to her that his clientele consisted largely of farmers who chain-smoked, but he was willing to place an exhaust fan in the area of the serving line. Ms. Hill told him that this step would not be sufficient to protect his patrons, and she left the materials with him and promised to call him back in a day or two after he had a chance to review the law and the educational materials.

Hinds explained, "In the meantime we sent Janet all the information on how to do a CIAA investigation and were preparing her for what we thought would

be a full-blown formal inspection with the county environmentalist."

In preparation for the encounter, Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch Director Diane Beeson and Southern Local Support Coordinator Knoxye Williams went over all the procedures with Ms. Hill to prepare her thoroughly for a potentially difficult encounter. Ms. Hill was pleasantly surprised, however.

Before she could get very far into her discussion with the owner on what was to happen next, the owner said he had read all of the information and had decided that he was going to go 100 percent smoke free in his restaurant because that was the best thing to do for his customers. He further asked whether she could come out and go over everything he needed to do to make his café a 100 percent no smoking facility.

"I'm sure we have things that happen that affect more people than this, but I can't think of a better outcome for the residents and customers of this little café and town," Hinds said. "It probably won't make the newspapers anywhere, but in my view this small victory is what it's all about. Thanks to an Alabama citizen for taking the time to let us know about this, thanks to the café owner for recognizing what is best for his customers and a special thanks to smooth-talking Janet Hill for being our 'pointy end of the smoke-free spear.'"

## State Health Department Submits PHAB Application June 22

With cutbacks that result in public health professionals doing more with less, employees may wonder why the department is devoting time and resources to becoming nationally accredited.

Public health accreditation is a process to measure the health department's performance against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused, and evidence-based standards. Accreditation requires an ongoing commitment to performance management and quality improvement. The Public Health Accreditation Board, or PHAB as many know it, is the official accrediting body for national public health department accreditation.

ADPH submitted an application to PHAB for national public health accreditation on June 22, 2015. The Accreditation Leadership Team gathered that day to review the final application prior to submission, and State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson submitted the application.

"This is an important step," Dr. Williamson said. "The accreditation process will allow our department to move forward further emphasizing the importance and commitment to quality improvement in all that we do for Alabama's citizens. This is an exciting time for public health."

Accreditation Coordinator Carol Heier said, "Our Accreditation Leadership Team, various employee work groups, and other employees statewide have worked hard to reach this major milestone in the accreditation process. Submission of the accreditation application is a great accomplishment to be celebrated."

The next step in the accreditation process is to begin uploading documentation examples into PHAB's online information system called "e-PHAB." The state health department will upload 364 specific documentation examples to demonstrate conformity with PHAB Standards and Measures, Version 1.5. All of

**continued on page 13**

# The Spring of Spice: Department Conducts Outbreak Investigation in April and May

Just as it has with other recent outbreak investigations, the Epidemiology Division of the Bureau of Communicable Diseases responded quickly to protect the health of the public when it learned that there had been a rapid rise in emergency room visits, hospitalizations and poison control center calls as a result of spice, a toxic psychoactive herbal and chemical compound that mimics marijuana.

Adverse medical effects of its use include hallucinations, nausea and vomiting, paranoia, and increased heart rate. Even though Alabama designed its active ingredients as Schedule I drugs in 2011, slightly different combinations have since been manufactured and marketed. While believed by many to be legal, this product remains illegal in Alabama.

After Mississippi State Epidemiologist Dr. Thomas Dodds contacted the department about the alarming rapid rise in hospital visits in his state following exposure to tainted spice, the department acted at once and surveillance began. The case definition was determined to be as follows:

- \* Probable: patient presenting with self-reported or other suspicion of synthetic cannabinoid or synthetic marijuana use within 24 hours of onset of illness with or without other recreational substances
- \* Suspect: patient presenting with suspected use of unknown recreational drug(s) within 24 hours of onset of illness, based on clinical presentation

A Health Alert Network (HAN) notification was issued and health care providers statewide were asked to consider exposure to synthetic cannabinoids as a diagnosis for patients presenting with severe illness with the following symptoms: rapid heart rate, nausea and vomiting, agitation, confusion, lethargy, hallucinations, kidney and respiratory problems.

In a multistate/multistakeholder call on April 22, it was decided that Commander Melissa Morrison would participate in an Epi AID in Mississippi in light of the dramatic increase in spice-related emergencies.

Dr. Mary G. McIntyre, State Epidemiologist and ADPH Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, emphatically cautioned the public in media reports, "Responses to these chemicals can be unpredictable and deadly. People have experienced coma, kidney failure, and heart attacks just to mention some of the effects experienced by users. Please do not take the risk. Do not use these products." She also warned that bizarre and violent behavior can result.

Epidemiology established a system to monitor numbers of related hospital visits and the ages of the patients on a weekly basis, participated in news conferences with law enforcement officials, conducted news media interviews, and issued many news releases to warn the public about the hazards of spice use. Emergency medical service participation allowed

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## ClubEpi Enjoys A Collaborative Environment

ClubEpi is a monthly meeting of epidemiologists, research analysts, and public health scientists. The purpose of ClubEpi is to review and share research, communicate information regarding the collection and analysis of data, and garner technical assistance for various data-driven projects.

Activities are coordinated by Commander Melissa Morrison, a CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer assigned to the Alabama Department of Public Health. Membership in ClubEpi includes 38 ADPH employees and persons from the Alabama Medicaid Agency and Alabama Department of Mental Health.

ClubEpi members are involved in several workforce development efforts, including the development of a data skills and training needs assessment. Additionally, ClubEpi members actively participate in public health emergency preparedness and response activities



**ClubEpi has met regularly since April 2010. Some of the members attending the Aug. 13 meeting in the RSA Tower are shown here.**

such as the Community Assessment of Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER).

## Spice, continued from page 5

the collection of data as a result of adverse reactions to spice. Active surveillance continued from April 15 until May 28.

Eighty-two hospitals participated. Area surveillance staff who assisted by contacting hospitals each day included the following individuals:

- PHA 1, Kathy Linzey, R.N.
- PHA 2, Toni Richie, R.N., Theresa Tucker, R.N.
- PHA 3, Jenny Parker-Long, R.N.
- PHA 4, Bridgette Kennedy, M.PH., Stephanie Millsap, M.PH.
- PHA 5, Michelle Marlow, R.N.
- PHA 6, Kelly Haywood, R.N.
- PHA 7, Tina Norwood, R.N.
- PHA 8, Patti Stadlberger, R.N.
- PHA 9, Kelly Singleton, R.N.
- PHA 10, Catherine Person, R.N.
- PHA 11, Becky Dixon, R.N., Cheryl Lahrs, R.N.

At Central Office EPI, Cassie Brailer, CDC-assigned Public Health Associate, gathered the information from area staff for inclusion in a weekly status

report. Epidemiologist MisChele White of the Office of Emergency Medical Services also assisted CDR Morrison. Of the 798 emergency calls made for spice-related exposure, 693 were in April and May. The number of emergency medical services calls peaked during the week of April 10-16.

Hospitalization and intensive care unit data were most likely an underestimate, and at least 1,046 patients were seen and 259 were hospitalized in Alabama. Five deaths were reported, with ages of the deceased ranging from the 20s through the 40s. Mobile County reported the highest number of emergency room visits, 498.

In July, the dedicated staff who had worked to help quell the outbreak gathered for a videoconference to share lessons learned and to look at the demographics of the outbreak. These were the findings:

Demographically, patients were overwhelmingly male (82.5 percent, 572 patients). The average (mean) age of the patients was 31 and the median age was 27, with patients ranging in age from 9 through their 60s. Patients identified themselves as black or African American (71.7 percent, 497), white (25.7, 179) and other races or ethnicities (3.2 percent, 23).

## Diabetes Student Ambassadors Help Reverse Diabetes Epidemic

High school students from seven schools in Jefferson County participated in the Daring to Defeat Diabetes Ambassadors Community Health Fair and Awards Luncheon at the Gardendale Civic Center Complex in April.

By serving as Diabetes Ambassadors, the teenagers had the opportunity to help take blood pressures and provide diabetes education to others. They committed to the movement to “Share, Act, Learn and Give” to stop diabetes.

Diabetes Student Ambassadors participated in the following activities:

- Led in the creation of a video/public service announcement on the theme, “Why is it important to help defeat diabetes?” The prize-winning video featured students explaining their understanding of the disease, followed by a colorful educational piece. The school whose video was judged best received a \$100 donation.
- Created posters for entry in a poster contest.
- Participated in a student-led community health fair.
- Learned about diabetes and educated their classmates and community about the disease.

- Participated in Diabetes Alert Day on March 24 by educating classmates, offering diabetes risk tests and having 10 or more people to take them, and engaging people to take the Diabetes Pledge.

“Student Diabetes Ambassadors are the keys to reversing the diabetes epidemic in Alabama, even if it takes one student at a time,” Nurse Coordinator Debra Griffin with the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, said. “They have shown their dedication to reversing the diabetes epidemic in Alabama. We hope that some of these students will go on to become diabetes educators, doctors, nurses and community advocates to join in the diabetes fight.”



Jefferson County students promote diabetes awareness.

# Wearing Blue: Men Urged to be Positive Role Models and Make Their Health a Priority

The Alabama Department of Public Health joined in the celebration of June as National Men's Health Month and June 15-21 as National Men's Health Week 2015 by encouraging men to take steps to become healthier, stronger and make their health a priority.

The purpose of this annual observance is to heighten awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. Regrettably, men's health is often overlooked and their symptoms are often ignored.

On average, men live five fewer years than women and die at higher rates. Men make up 92 percent of workplace deaths, mainly because they are employed in dangerous occupations. Furthermore, 1 in 6 men will get prostate cancer and approximately 28,000 will die from the disease this year.

State Health Officer, Dr. Donald Williamson said, "Risks to the health and well-being of men are on the rise, due to a lack of awareness and a failure to pursue preventive screening and care. Men are often the family breadwinners, and because of their jobs and lifestyle, forget or postpone making their own health a priority. I encourage all men to become positive role models in their families and communities by setting the example of eating right, exercising regularly, and getting routine medical checkups."

Heart disease, cancer and accidents are leading causes of death in Alabama men, but there are lifestyle changes that can help lower risk. The following are some important steps men can take to improve their health and stay healthy:

- Quit using tobacco

- Get enough sleep
- Increase physical activity
- Eat healthy food
- Tame stress
- Schedule regular checkups
- Keep track of your readings for blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol and follow your health care provider's recommendations
- Get vaccinated to stay healthy

Some diseases and conditions may not have symptoms, so checkups can help diagnose health issues before they can become problems. Men should pay special attention to signs and symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, excessive thirst, and problems with urination. If you have these or other symptoms, be sure to see your doctor right away.

## Special Wear Blue Activities in Alabama

Men's Health Week in Alabama is celebrated each year as the week leading up to and including Father's Day. Gov. Robert Bentley issued a proclamation observing this week in Alabama. Dr. Williamson recorded public service announcements that were used statewide on radio stations.

State Coordinator William Kennedy of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services was interviewed on WSFA television's Alabama Live program with Tonya Terry. He was also interviewed on the radio show Viewpoint Alabama on the Alabama Radio Network. His interview was aired statewide on multiple radio stations.

The public was encouraged to wear blue on June 19 in support of men's health. An outdoor educational event focusing on men's health was

held that day at the RSA Park on Monroe Street in Montgomery.

Other events in Alabama also promoted men's health. Free prostate cancer screenings were held at the Dallas County Health Department in Selma, the Butler County Health Department in Greenville, and the Monroe County Health Department in Monroeville.

All county health departments in Public Health Area 9 did an excellent job in promoting Men's Health Month Awareness. "It was an honor to be part of this very important educational event," Area Administrator Ricky Elliott said. Each county participated in the June 19 Wear Blue Day. All health departments had an educational display booth and shared literature and promotional items, and messages on marquees on electronic bulletin boards reminded the public of Men's Health Awareness Month.

Listed below are some of their activities to promote men's health and the names of the county coordinators:

### Baldwin County: (Daphne Baum)

- Each health department including the environmental office participated in "Bring a Health Food Snack" on June 19.
- Team pictures were submitted to local newspaper for awareness.
- South Baldwin County Hospital shared the ADPH men's health awareness literature at its monthly health meeting.
- City of Foley received educational literature for its employee benefit banquet. (Next year the city plans to invite county health department to have a booth displaying men's health

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# Environmentalists Rescue Trapped Whitetail Fawn

A second site visit became a rescue mission when Cullman County Environmental Supervisor Patricia Lindsey and Public Health Area 2 Environmental Director Tom Jensen came upon a young fawn trapped in a hole in a remote area. With their care, determination and persistence, they were able to free the frightened animal.

On July 31, the environmentalists headed to a location near Smith Lake in Cullman County to follow up on an onsite sewage application. They arrived at the percolation test site located up a steep embankment and in a totally wooded area. The first soil boring had been made using a post-hole digger and was about 15 inches in diameter and 40 inches deep.

“When I walked up to the hole I noticed something in it,” Jensen said. “It turned out to be a whitetail fawn that had somehow fallen into this narrow hole back feet first and was now wedged in the hole and could not move.”

The fawn’s head was about 12 inches below the surface and was not visible until the pair got right up to the hole. After some discussion and thought, Jensen reached down into the hole and attempted to pull the fawn up by reaching under the front legs and lifting.

“With some squalling going on, I got the fawn up a small distance, but its back legs were wedged so

tightly I had to set it back down,” Jensen said. So they decided to try to dig the fawn out by making another hole next to the existing one, going down about half way and then connecting the two holes. They had no advanced tools with them to make the rigorous task easier. After almost an hour of hard digging through roots with a sharpshooter shovel, they were ready.

Jensen again reached down and picked up the fawn under the front legs and pulled it up and over into the second hole. The front legs came free, but he had to manually reach down and pull each back leg out. Once the fawn was free, it ran about 10 yards, fell over trying to get its composure, and then took off into the woods.

Reflecting on the memorable day, Jensen was disappointed that he had been unable to capture a video of the fawn’s rescue on his new iPhone 6. He lamented, “Too bad – this could have gone viral on YouTube!”

This incident is all in a day’s work for an environmentalist, Jensen said. It is not unusual to come across creatures such as water moccasins in the course of their normal duties.

Sherry Bradley, director of the Bureau of Environmental Services, said, “This is the softer side of environmentalists we often don’t hear about. We are so proud of them and the work they do every day.”



**The approximately 20-pound fawn was breathing heavily when Tom Jensen and Patricia Lindsey arrived at the percolation test site.**



**Patricia Lindsey holds a plastic raincoat over the frightened deer to keep the dirt out of its eyes.**

# Expect a Visit to Your Workplace: OCE to Determine HIPAA Compliance/Provide Training

As of July 1, 2015, the Office of Civil Rights issued a list of the most commonly cited HIPAA Privacy and Security issues. The five major problem areas include:

1. Impermissible uses and disclosures of protected health information;
2. Lack of safeguards of protected health information;
3. Lack of patient access to their protected health information;
4. Lack of administrative safeguards of electronic protected health information; and
5. Use or disclosure of more than the minimum necessary protected health information.

In an effort to monitor HIPAA compliance, the Office of Compliance and Ethics (OCE) will be conducting walk-through activities in every area of the department on a routine basis. These areas include the RSA Tower, county health departments, and the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories. The purpose of each walk-through will be to determine HIPAA compliance and provide refresher training where needed.

## WHAT WILL BE THE FOCUS?

1. Posting of the Notice of Privacy Practices (NOPP) in an inconspicuous place, if applicable;
2. Adherence to password procedures;
3. Medical record storage;
4. Knowledge of reporting requirements for HIPAA breaches;
5. Completion of HIPAA training by all employees;
6. Proper disposal of protected health information;
7. Proper usage of sign-in sheets;
8. Security of workstations when unattended.

In addition, employees may be asked questions about compliance-related issues to determine their knowledge of HIPAA Privacy and Security. This is not a pass/fail quiz. It will be used by OCE to gauge the knowledge base of employees and determine how to better focus future training activities.

By *Samarria Dunson, J.D., CHC, Director*



**Samarria Dunson (pictured), and Oyana Moorer of the Office of Compliance and Ethics and Victor Hunt of the Office of Facilities Management will be issuing pink demerit slips for HIPAA violations. They plan to visit each public health area at least quarterly and all offices and labs in the Central Office to help educate employees about HIPAA security and privacy issues.**

## HIPAA VIOLATION DEMERIT SLIP



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BUREAU/OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

FLOOR: \_\_\_\_\_

### VIOLATION

- FAILURE TO LOCK WORKSTATION
- PHI NOT SECURED AT END OF DAY
- PASSWORD VISIBLE ON WORKSTATION
- IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF PHI
- INFORMATION LEFT ON FAX/COPIER
- OTHER

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**Wearing Blue, continued  
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- awareness literature at its yearly employee wellness event.)
- Department of Transportation office was provided educational literature for all employees.
- Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce displayed educational literature for consumers/visitors.
- Robertsdale Police Department received educational literature for all of its employees.
- City of Robertsdale advertised Men's Health Month on social media including its Facebook page and on Instagram.
- Area 9 office displayed Men's Health Month literature for its employees.
- Visited the Men's Health Awareness State Campaign at the RSA Tower Park in Montgomery.

**Butler County:  
(Nicole Lovvorn, L.B.S.W.)**

- Employees participated in the June 6 prostate screening with the Men's Health Awareness booth.
- Health department displayed Men's Health Month booth.
- Conducted a prostate cancer screening in Greenville.

**Clarke County:  
(Charlotte Detlefsen, B.S.N., R.N.)**

- Employees had special T-shirts made and wore them on Wear Blue Day.
- Fliers and educational literature were shared in the community and lobby of the health department.
- Blue scrubs were worn to represent Men's Health Month.
- Group picture was submitted to local newspaper.

**Conecuh County: (Wanda Biggs)**

- Church bulletin displayed men's health information.
- Participated in the Men's and Women's Day Event at New Pilgrim Church.
- Participated in Wear Blue Day.
- Shared posters with local businesses.
- Shared promotional items with local physician offices.

**Covington County:  
(Pamela Foster, L.B.S.W.)**

- Participated in the men's conference on June 5.
- Visited local hospitals, medical offices, colleges, stores and gyms sharing men's health literature and awareness.
- Displayed Men's Health Month on an electric sign.

**Escambia County:  
(Phyllis Hall, L.B.S.W.)**

- Shared men's health information in and around the county.
- Gave water bottles and flashlights to local auto parts stores, YMCA, local gyms, and individual men and church groups.

**Monroe County:  
(Lynn Rainey, L.B.S.W.)**

- Shared posters and handouts among community businesses. Advertised the awareness on Facebook.
- Announced Aug. 15 prostate cancer screening.

**Washington County:  
(Erin Jimerson, L.G.S.W.)**

- Employees had T-Shirts designed to promote men's health awareness.
- Submitted group photograph to local newspaper.

**Commendations**

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to [Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us) for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

**Noelle Ahmann**  
Communications  
and Marketing  
from *Shanone  
Medlock  
Montgomery, Ala.*

**Sandra Daniels**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
from *Parish  
Law Firm  
Montgomery, Ala.*

**Donna Boyce**  
Wellness  
Program  
from *Connie Pruett  
Birmingham, Ala.*

**Chris Hall**  
Communications  
and Marketing  
from *Melanie  
Rightmyer,  
D.N.P., R.N.  
Montgomery, Ala.*

**Jill Brewer  
Jody Mitchell**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
*Alabama Coroners  
Association  
Montgomery, Ala.*

**Dorene Mitchell**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
from *Cynthia  
Moore  
South Carolina*

**Florine Croxton  
Catherine  
Molchan Donald**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
from *Penny Davis  
Tuscaloosa, Ala.*

**Joan Riley**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
from *Dorcas  
Barnes  
Garland, Texas*

**Connie Danner**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
from *Delores  
Brown  
Daphne, Ala.*

**Beatrice Zeigler**  
Center for Health  
Statistics  
from *Dale County  
Probate Office  
Ozark, Ala.*

## Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently.

### July

**Gwendolyn Ankum**

Montgomery County Health  
Department

**Deborah Bice**

Health Provider Standards

**Brenda Causey**

Public Health Area 6

**Cynthia Elmore**

Coffee County Health Department

**Cravens Gibbs**

Morgan County Health Department

**Angela Hester**

Sumter County Health Department

**Jasper Holmes**

Dallas County Health Department

**Lisa Martin**

Home and Community Services

### August

**Sherry Allison**

Colbert County Health Department

**Martha Crow**

Marion County Health Department

**Judy Gunter**

Winston County Health Department

**Betty Hogan**

Morgan County Health Department

**Geraldine Jones-Lockett**

Madison County Health Department

**Kathy McDaniel**

Greene County Health Department

**Kimberly McGuffey-Falkner**

Houston County Health Department

**Pamela Milam**

Hale County Health Department

**Mae Owens**

Montgomery County Health  
Department

**LaMont Pack**

Health Promotion and Chronic  
Disease

**Beverly Perea**

Public Health Area 5

**Peggie Smith**

Talladega County Health  
Department

**Linda Snell**

Human Resources

**Karen Tipton**

Henry County Health Department

## In Memoriam



**Kathie Limbach, public information specialist with the Madison County Health Department, died Aug. 1 as a result of complications from an automobile collision. Mrs. Limbach was an active member of the Alabama Environmental Health Association, served on its board, and was an active member of the Alabama State Employees Association. Public health employees from throughout the state expressed their sadness over the loss of their beloved colleague who had worked in the department for more than 25 years.**

## Retirement Celebrations



**The Bureau of Family Health Services honored Shirley J. Lee, administrative assistant for the Healthy Child Care Alabama program, on May 19. She is shown with Deputy Director Chris Haag. She retired effective June 1 with more than 26 years of state service.**



**Colleagues and friends hosted a retirement party on June 30 honoring Cheri Roy for her 36 1/2 years of state service. She is shown with Kelly Stevens, director of the Epidemiology Division, Bureau of Communicable Disease.**



**Dr. Tom Geary, director of the Bureau of Health Provider Standards, is shown with Queen Whitfield who retired after 30 years of state service, 25 of which were with Health Provider Standards.**

# Medical Society of Montgomery County Recognizes Women's Health Information for the Incarcerated (WHI-FI) Program with Community Service Award

The Medical Society of Montgomery County honored Aid to Inmate Mothers (AIM) for their collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health Office of Women's Health (OWH) and use of the Women's Health Information for Incarcerated Women (WHI-FI) program at the society's 15th Annual Awards Program May 4.

Carol Potok, AIM Executive Director, and Jessica Hardy, OWH Director, accepted the Community Service Award on behalf of AIM and the WHI-FI program. The award is given to either a non-physician individual or organization that has served the community through projects to enhance the quality of health care and health awareness throughout the community. WHI-FI strives to bring health classes to women while they are incarcerated and hopes to link women with their local county health departments for ongoing health care when they return home.

According to the event printed program, with help from the AIM staff, "Ms. Hardy organizes volunteer health professionals from across the state to facilitate the programs. Thanks to her dedication and belief in the project, incarcerated women have access to essential information about their own health which can be helpful both before and after they leave prison."

The program detailed that in 2007, Ms. Potok and Ms. Hardy met while serving on a special legislative commission for women and girls in the criminal justice system. They discussed the lack of general health information provided to incarcerated women and how this lack of information meant the women



**Brad Katz, M.D., President, Board of Trustees, Medical Society of Montgomery County, presents the Community Service Award on behalf of Aid to Inmate Mothers and the WHI-FI program to Jessica Hardy, left, and Carol Potok of AIM.**

often did not recognize symptoms of conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer, unnecessarily delaying treatment.

WHI-FI was born out this concern and a health education program was initiated in three women's facilities: Julia Tutwiler Prison, Montgomery Women's Facility and Birmingham Work Release center. Groups of 50-70 women regularly attend health-themed monthly meetings at each facility.

Programs include the following topic areas: HIV/STD prevention, breast cancer, heart health, family planning options, diabetes, fetal alcohol syndrome, prenatal class, healthy pregnancy and exercise/nutrition.

## Breastfeeding Support in the Workplace

The month of August is recognized as "Breastfeeding Awareness Month" in the Alabama WIC Program. This year's theme established by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is "Breastfeeding and Work--Let's Make it Work." The theme emphasizes the importance of strengthening and providing support to women to combine breastfeeding and work.

The Breastfeeding at Work Project builds upon the Business Case for Breastfeeding initiative of the Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The website <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions/about.html> provides resources including videos and online toolkits for breastfeeding mothers

and employers. Supporting mothers in reaching their individual breastfeeding goals is a vital role of WIC. To reach the goal of exclusive breastfeeding, mothers need support to continue breastfeeding after returning to work.

Mother's Rooms are located on the 13th floor of the RSA Tower to help mothers continue breastfeeding after returning to work. The rooms allow a private place for mothers to pump breast milk for their infants. Support in the workplace helps mothers reach their breastfeeding goals.

If you would like more information about breastfeeding, please contact Michell Grainger at (334)206-2921 or [Michell.Grainger@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Michell.Grainger@adph.state.al.us).

## **Telemedicine, continued from page 1**

Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to help ensure better access to health care. CHIP's priority is patient access to care. Long-range goals include increasing access to Ambulatory Primary Care, increasing the number of adults who think of one person as a personal physician, decreasing the number of adults with no health insurance, increasing the number of primary care clinicians in Alabama, and increasing the utilization of telemedicine in rural and underserved areas.

Telemedicine can be used for a broad range of services including primary care, maternity care, HIV/AIDS care, mental health counseling and post surgery visits. Each telemedicine cart has a computer, two monitors, a high-definition camera, Bluetooth stethoscope, handheld exam camera with attachments for general viewing, dermatology and otoscope, and additional equipment is available for maternity patients to perform an ultrasound.

Telemedicine is an opportunity for ADPH and its partners to extend quality services in an equitable manner for clients as close to home as possible. In collaboration with community partners, "E-medicine" through telemedicine translates into one holistic solution for patients who struggle with access to medical care by offering a complement of services via electronic means.

"The Division of HIV Prevention and Care's telemedicine goals are to decrease access barriers and improve adherence to care," Sharon Jordan, director of the Division of HIV Prevention and Care, said.

"The increased use of telemedicine is one way to improve access to health care and improve care because patients not only have access to specialists but they are more likely to remain in care thanks to

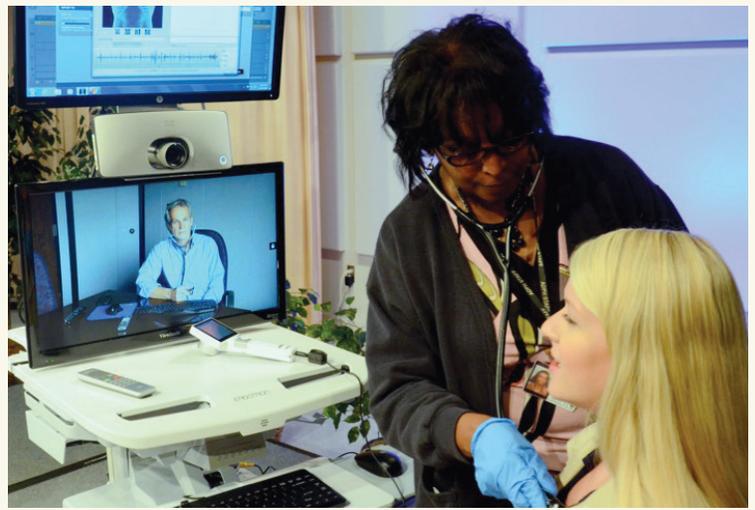
## **PHAB application, continued from page 4**

the documentation will be submitted to PHAB at the same time.

ADPH has one year to submit all documentation after the application is accepted and e-PHAB is opened to the department. The department's goal is to submit the documentation by the end of November this year.

After documentation is submitted, the next step in the accreditation process is the site visit. PHAB predicts that the site visit will be conducted about eight months after all documentation is submitted. The department will be engaged with PHAB during those eight months to respond to questions about the documentation and to schedule and prepare for the site visit.

The Community Health Assessment (CHA), Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and



**The process is that the nurse with the patient uses a Bluetooth stethoscope and specialized computer software to transmit heart and lung sounds to the clinician at the remote location. The clinician at the remote location also uses this Bluetooth stethoscope and is able to adjust the volume, and using the software as seen on the top screen, directs the placement of the stethoscope and sees additional information.**

its convenience," Michael Smith, director of Video Communications and Distance Learning said.

Gov. Robert Bentley has also proposed the increased use of telemedicine to increase access to care and help to reduce growing health care costs.

For more information on the HIV Prevention and Care's telemedicine effort, please contact Jora White at [Jora.White@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Jora.White@adph.state.al.us).

For more information about telemedicine at ADPH county health departments, please contact Jeannie Gaines at [Jeannie.Summerlin@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Jeannie.Summerlin@adph.state.al.us).

*By JORA WHITE*

the ADPH Strategic Plan documents were finalized and submitted to PHAB as part of the accreditation application. These publications are posted on the department's accreditation website along with other information about our progress. The Web address is [www.adph.org/accreditation](http://www.adph.org/accreditation).

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Disclaimer: The contents of this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of or endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Cindy Goocher and William (BJ) Diltz Receive REHS/RS Credentials

Cindy Goocher, Environmental Health Division supervisor with the Montgomery County Health Department, and William (B.J.) Diltz, Public Health Environmentalist of the Tuscaloosa County Health Department, have received certificates of registration and completed the requirements and testing to become registered environmental health specialist/registered sanitarians (REHS/RS).

Public Health Area 8 Environmental Director Steven McDaniel said, "As Cindy's supervisor, I would like to recognize her for achieving this elite status among fellow environmentalists."

Also sending congratulations is Public Health Area 3 Environmental Director Tracy Elmore, who stated, "BJ has been employed with the health department since 2006. He has been an exemplary employee during his time here with us, and we are very proud of him for this accomplishment."

The REHS/RS is the premiere National Environmental Health Association credential. It is available to a wide range of environmental health professionals. Individuals holding the REHS/RS credential show competency in environmental health issues, direct and train personnel to respond to routine or emergency environmental



**BJ Diltz**



**Cindy Goocher**

situations, and frequently provide education to their communities on environmental health concerns.

Strict eligibility requirements must be met and passage of a four-hour REHS/RS credentialing examination and continuing education are required.

Among the other environmentalists in Alabama with the designation are the following: Craig Corwin, Tim Hatch, John Hooper, April Pearce, Michele Sellers, Rene' Sinsky, Jane Snow, Rachel Sullenger, Cyndi Tereszkievicz and Doug Turnbull. Retiree Carl Thornton also holds the designation.

## Alabama Employees 'Get Moving' at State Capitol

The theme for Alabama Employee Health and Fitness Walk 2015 on May 15 was "Get Moving Alabama." This noncompetitive annual event is targeted to worksites and is designed to encourage employees to get up and move throughout the work day as part of living an active lifestyle. The event is sponsored by the department, the Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports, and the Alabama State Employees' Insurance Board (SEIB).

"Walking during breaks and lunch is a great way to fit in the recommended 30 minutes of aerobic activity every day. We all live hectic lives and this event at the Capitol reminds us that not only can this be done but we can find many opportunities to be more physically active if we look for them," Laurie Eldridge-Auffant of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services said.

"Our focus is to encourage, educate and promote physical fitness for all residents of Alabama," Phil Holmes, acting executive director of the commission, said. "It's great to see the number of state employees that participate in this event each year, proving that

physical fitness is not only fun but a key component to living a healthy life."

Tonya Campbell, SEIB marketing director, said, "The goal of this event is to encourage physical activity in the workplace and promote healthy habits, goals that are reflected in the SEIB wellness program. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in an event that positively impacts the lives of state employees."



**Spirited warm-ups on the Capitol lawn preceded the fitness walk.**

# Jessica Hardy Chosen as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Nurse Leader

Jessica Hardy, M.P.H., D.N.P., R.N., the director of the Office of Women's Health, is one of just 25 nurses from across the country to be selected as a Public Health Nurse Leader (PHNL) by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). She will participate in a two-year leadership development program designed to strengthen the capacity of senior public health nurses to improve population health, address social determinants of health, respond to emerging trends in health and health care, influence policy, and lead collaboration in their communities.

The program's goal is to support nurses who are ready to lead public health departments in building a Culture of health in their communities. Since PHNLs participate in partnerships across all sectors and disciplines that lead to collaborative action, they can leverage new and existing opportunities for even healthier communities. As part of the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, the PHNLs will work closely with the Action Coalitions in their states to implement recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing report.

"At RWJF, we are working to build a Culture of health that enables everyone in the United States to live the healthiest lives possible, supported by a system in which nurses are essential partners in providing care and promoting health," said Susan Hassmiller, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, RWJF's senior adviser for nursing and director of the Campaign for Action—a joint initiative of RWJF and AARP. "We are so proud of all 25 nurses accepted into this program and excited about the many ways they will strengthen their state Action Coalitions by bringing public health expertise to their work. Every one of the nurses in this program will help make their communities healthier and our health care system stronger."

"I am thrilled to have been selected for this honor, and look forward to strengthening my skills so I can do even more to improve the health of my community and help transform the nursing profession," Hardy said. "I know this experience will enhance my ability to serve my community. I look forward to working even more closely with the Alabama Health Action Coalition (AL-HAC), [Alabamahealthactioncoalition.org](http://Alabamahealthactioncoalition.org), in the months ahead."

Hardy has served more than 20 years with the Alabama Department of Public Health in various capacities, which include assistant state nursing director, emergency preparedness nurse coordinator,

as the Alabama women's health liaison for the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and she is passionate about women's health.

In 2002 Hardy was appointed to serve as the first director for the Alabama Office of Women's Health (OWH), a position she continues to hold, and was appointed as acting director of Alabama's Office of Minority Health from 2008 to 2012. In addition to the daily responsibilities of the OWH, she serves as the state coordinator for the Emergency Preparedness Closed Points of Dispensing (POD) Program throughout the state. Hardy has served as a presenter on health issues at local, state, and national conferences, and is an active member in a number of professional organizations.

RWJF's Public Health Nurse Leaders program was open to registered nurses who hold leadership positions in governmental public health organizations. Its goal is to help the PHNLs develop their leadership skills and connections with key influencers so they can build and spread a Culture of health. Participating nurses will spend their first year focused on individual leadership development. Second-year activities are designed to enhance the leadership competencies and coaching skills of both the nurses in this program and key members of the Action Coalition in their states.

The Public Health Nurse Leaders selected for this program are from the following cities/areas: Montgomery, Ala.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Little Rock, Ark.; Lakeport, Calif.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Marietta, Ga.; Honolulu, Hawaii; Belleville, Ill.; Mason City, Iowa; Hutchinson, Kan.; Paulina, La.; Baltimore, Md.; St. Cloud, Minn.; Jackson, Miss.; Jefferson City, Mo.; Lincoln, Neb.; Santa Fe, N.M.; Syracuse, N.Y.; Charlotte, N.C.; Columbus, Ohio; Marysville, Ohio; Austin, Texas; Brownsville, Texas; Seattle, Wash.; and Martinsburg, W.Va.

The RWJF Public Health Nurse Leaders program is located at the Center for Creative Leadership, a global thought leader in the leadership development field for 45 years.



**Jessica Hardy**

# Neither Rain, Nor Sleet, Nor Dark of Night...Power Outage Doesn't Slow Marshall County Immunization Clinic

Major thunderstorms and a power outage didn't prevent the staff of the Marshall County Health Department from keeping their evening immunization clinic schedule on Aug. 10.

Clinic Supervisor Sara Shelton said around 4:30 p.m. the wind blew a tree down onto a power line causing the electricity to go out. So the nurses and clerks used flashlights, emergency lighting, natural light, and hand sanitizer to assist the patients in the clinic.

"Neither rain, nor sleet, nor dark of night keeps public health professionals from their mission," Public Health Area 2 Administrator Judy Smith said.

Even though the department had urged parents to have their children immunized on clinic days in June and July, there is always a last-minute rush just before school starts. Immunizations were given from 7:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Aug. 10 and 11 at the Guntersville clinic.

## Calendar of Events



### August 26

Alabama Safe Sleep Outreach Project, 10-11:30 a.m.

For more information, contact Amy Stratton, (334) 206-6403.



### September 9

Head Lice: Practical Approaches in Management, 2-3 p.m.

For more information, contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-5881.



### September 16

Home Health Infection Control, Home Health Paraprofessional Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more information, contact Jackie Giddens, (334) 206-5685.

### September 18

Multicultural Event hosted by iChoices Wellness Program and team, 10 a.m.-noon, RSA Activity Center, 201 Dexter Ave., Montgomery.



### September 26

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information visit the Drug Enforcement Administration website at [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov), or call 1-800-882-9539.

### October 1

ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.

For more information, contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



### October 21

Urinary Incontinence Assessment and Treatment, Home Health Paraprofessional Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more information, contact Jackie Giddens, (334) 206-5685.